Drowning:

A Single Player Game

By ReggieTheBird

To play this game, you will need a deck of 54 playing cards (52 + 2 Jokers), and a six-sided die.

Character Creation:

Begin by creating a backstory for your character. They may be rich or poor, loved or hated, religious, political, spiritual, ugly, beautiful, from any country and of any age. This will not be important. The Ocean will treat you the same.

Gameplay:

Your boat has sunk! You are far from shore, but you have no other hope of survival. Scared and bleeding, you begin your swim through the frigid waters.

Swimming for Shore: Roll the die and draw that many cards from the deck. **Check for Sharks!** With the last card that you drew, consult the **Ocean Oracle**, then add all drawn cards to the Discard Pile. If you ever are asked to take a card from the Discard Pile, shuffle it beforehand. If there are not enough cards in the Discard Pile, take as many cards from the Discard Pile as possible before continuing with your turn. If you ever are asked to take a card from the Deck and cannot, you **Reach the Shore.**

Rolling Zeros: As you swim, you may roll a number that becomes a Zero due to any number of difficulties you encounter on your swim. You do not make any progress, and the cold of the water sinks in. If you ever roll three Zeros in a row, you freeze, and then **Drown.** Your body is not your own, and it does not cooperate as you sink.

Checking for Sharks: Check all cards that you drew this turn. If you drew both Jokers or three of your cards are of the same suit your bloody floundering has attracted the attention of a shark. Consult the **Shark Oracle**. You may attract multiple sharks in the same turn. This rarely goes well for you.

Respiratory Impairment: As you swim, sometimes you take a mouthful of water, and you can't quite cough all of it up. Subtract your **Respiratory Impairment** value from all **Swimming for Shore** rolls. If you reach a **Respiratory Impairment** value of six, you **Drown,** but slower than usual. You are awake for longer, and you wish you weren't.

Drowning: Your lungs fill with water as you sink below the surface. It is unlikely that your body will ever be recovered, but this does not matter to you very much as your body shuts down. You want to scream, but you have no air left. Set a timer for two minutes, and watch it tick down. That that is how long this process would take. You die. You lose.

Reach the Shore: Against all odds, you have made it to shore and have won the game. Congratulations!

The Ocean Oracle

The Spades:

2-10: ***Riptide:*** The shore doesn't seem to be getting any closer. In fact, it looks farther away than ever. Add the face value number of cards from the Discard Pile to the Deck. Shuffle the Deck.

♠

Ace: ***Jellyfish:*** They sting every part of you, and they don't even know it. Until you roll a six on the die, treat all rolls as halved (rounding down). Once you roll a six on the die, that roll and following rolls are to be treated as normal.

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Face Cards: ***Hopeless:*** You lose hope for a moment, as the shore seems farther away than ever. The blue is all encompassing. Roll the die. If you surpass the card's value, you find a reason to keep swimming. If you do not, you give up hope, and you drown. It is painful. (Jack = 1, Queen = 2, and King = 4)

The Diamonds:

2-10: ***Progress:*** You swim onwards.

♦

Ace: ***The Tide:*** The tide is with you! Roll the dice, then discard that many cards from the Deck. Do not **Check for Sharks.**

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Face Cards: ***Improvement:*** You remember swimming lessons you took a long time ago, or discover a better way to move through the water. Add the card's value to your next roll for a number of **Swim for Shore** rolls equal to the card's value. (Jack = 1, Queen = 2, and King = 4)

The Jokers:

Relief: A bouey! Or driftwood! Or anything! Take a breather. You may reset your **Respiratory Impairment** to zero, and you may remove any one card in the discard pile

The Clubs:

2-10: ***Chilled:*** The Cold sinks in. Subtract the face value of the card divided by three (rounded up) from your next Swim for Shore roll.

♣

Ace: ***Wrong Way:*** You've must have gotten turned around. Roll the die and add that many cards from the Discard Pile to the Deck. Shuffle the Deck.

♣

Face Cards: *Aggression:* You grow angry at your fate, and lash out in anger. Draw a number of cards equal to the card's value, and Check for Sharks. Add that same number of cards back to the Deck. Shuffle. (Jack = 4, Queen = 6, and King = 8)

The Hearts:

2-10: ***Choking:*** You faulter, and you inhale some water. Roll the die. If you rolled less than the card value, increase **Respiration Impairment** by one.

♥

Ace: ***Regret:*** You think of all of the things you will never had the chance to do, and all of the things you never will have a chance to do again. It crushes you. Select one of the following actions: Cry and **add five cards to the Deck**, Make Promises and increase **Respiratory Impairment** by one, Pray and **Roll a Zero**, or Give Up and **Drown**.

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Face Cards: ***Mirage:*** You think you see a boat, sent out to rescue you. It was never there, but you swim towards it anyways. Drawing from the Discard Pile, take a number of turns equal to the card's value. Any cards you discard get added to the Deck. Shuffle the Deck. (Jack = 1, Queen = 2, and King = 4)

The Shark Oracle

Shark Oracle:

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Spades: ***Meal:*** The sharks are hungry. Very hungry. It swims around you for a few minutes, and then attacks, biting a large chunk out of your abdomen. In three minutes, you are dead of either drowning or blood loss. The salt stings.

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Clubs: ***Snack:*** The shark is hungry, but not for much. This time, it only takes your leg. If you roll a five or a six after this, immediately reroll before consulting any other die value modifications. If you lose both legs, your arms quickly fail from exhaustion, and you **Drown.**

♥

Hearts: ***Frozen:*** You stop moving, and narrowly avoid the shark's notice. You have rolled two Zeros. The shark leaves, for the moment.

♦

Diamonds: ***Bloody Water:*** Sharks can smell a drop of blood from over a quarter of a mile away, and after the injuries you sustained in your boat crash, you have lost more than just a drop. Draw two cards from the Discard Pile for each Diamond card in you hand. Then, discard all Diamond cards in you hand. **Check for Sharks.**

Jokers: ***Dolphins:*** It is not a shark, but a dolphin! It laughs at you, and then leaves.